



Allama Mashriqi — A Giant Among Men

On Allama Mashriqi's 122nd Birth Anniversary

By Historian Nasim Yousaf

Allama Inayatullah Khan Al-Mashriqi was born on August 25, 1888. Mashriqi obtained his initial education at home and then attended school in Amritsar, prior to joining Foreman Christian College (F.C. College) in Lahore. He obtained his Masters degree in Mathematics in first class from the University of Punjab and later went on to study at the University of Cambridge. Throughout his academic life, Mashriqi made history; it is believed that his academic records at the University of Cambridge - where he completed four Triposes within five years with distinction - are yet to be broken.

Upon completion of his studies, Mashriqi joined Islamia College (Peshawar) as Vice Principal, and was later appointed Under Secretary at the Education Department of the Government of British India. In light of emerging differences with the British, he was demoted to Head Master of Government High School in Peshawar. During his tenure in Government Service, he was offered Knighthood and Ambassadorship to Afghanistan, but declined both offers, as he considered them a means for the British authorities to use him for their own political purposes.

While in Government service, Mashriqi wrote *Tazkirah*, a scientific commentary on the Holy Koran, which was nominated for the Nobel Prize. When the Nobel Prize Committee asked him to translate the book into any major European language, he declined to do so; he considered this to be an insult to the millions of people who spoke the Urdu language. Admiring Mashriqi and *Tazkirah*, Air Marshal (Retd.) Qazi Javed Ahmed wrote (in a message to me), "I am an admirer of Allama sahib and have read some of his books...I

have also read his two volumes of 'Tazkira'...He is so relevant even today and we can all draw inspiration and guidance from what he has written."

In 1930, Mashriqi founded the Khaksar Tehreek (Khaksar Movement) to revive the glory of the nation. However, the British became wary of the Movement's ultimate goal, which was predicated on ending British rule in order to bring freedom to India. Thus, the Tehrik was banned in Punjab in 1940 and Mashriqi was imprisoned. In 1941, the ban on the Movement was expanded throughout the entire India. The Government of British India demanded that Mashriqi disband his movement, or continue to remain behind bars. However, Mashriqi refused to succumb to any threat and replied that the Khaksar Movement was not his personal property that he could dispose off. The British, therefore, continued to imprison him for an extended period of time; he faced all atrocities with extraordinary courage and remained steadfast. In fact, Mashriqi fasted for 80 days in jail to protest his unjust imprisonment; he was ultimately released, but his movements remained restricted.

Following Mashriqi's release from prison, he vigorously began working for an end to British rule. He was warned many times by the British authorities to halt his activities, but he did not waver in his resolve. In 1945, he presented *The Constitution of Free India, 1946, A.C.*, which provided protection for the rights of both Muslims and non-Muslims, and could serve as a precursor to jointly seeking independence. Unfortunately, the document was not adopted for political reasons.

Mashriqi continued his efforts until British rule in India came to an end in 1947. Despite achieving independence, Mashriqi was saddened by the division of India. To him, partition was not the solution to the country's problems.

Allama Mashriqi died at Albert Victor Hospital (Mayo Hospital) in Lahore on August 27, 1963. A pall of gloom prevailed across the country following his tragic death; condolence messages from followers and admirers came from all over the world. Mashriqi's funeral prayers were led by Maulana Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi at Badshahi Mosque in Lahore. All along the funeral procession, the public gathered to pay tributes to their leader and showered his body with flowers.

Mashriqi left behind a lasting legacy of combating injustice, communalism, and sectarianism. He worked all his life for unity, discipline, and fostering a peaceful co-existence among people, regardless of religion, class, color or creed. As a result of his unrelenting fight, he forever changed the history of the Indian subcontinent; Mashriqi's vision of co-existence needs to be followed in order to bring peace to the world today.

Copyright Nasim Yousaf 2008-2010. The above article appeared in the media:

- *Nawa-e-Tokyo* (August 19, 2010)
- *The Pakistani Spectator* (August 24, 2010)
- *Pakistan ka Khudahafiz* (Pakistan's Leading Alternative Policy Institute) (August 26, 2010)
- *Make Pakistan Better* (August 26, 2010)
- *Geo Dost* (August 26, 2010)

- *Daily Press* (August 27, 2010)
- *Pakistan Aur Pakistaniat* (August 27, 2010)